

## **Futurewise Testimony to RTC 9/21/06**

The following is our list of the region's top transportation governance problems and some potential strategies for resolving them. They are presented somewhat informally. The first three problems are "governance" type problems and the last two are system performance problems that existing governance structures have failed to resolve.

1. Inability to prioritize projects / Political paralysis generated by excessively aggressive sub-regionalism.
  - Reduce and/or minimize the role of county councilmembers in decisionmaking; increase the role of County Executives.
  - Create an important advisory or decisionmaking role for appointed leaders with a regional perspective.
  - Retire the RTID and assign their mission to another entity.
  - Resolve variations in subregional funding needs and political tax capacity by providing for variable tax rates between subregions.
2. Excessive legal constraints on decisionmaking and planning (e.g. the "suicide pact" requirement for a joint conditional 2007 RTID/Sound Transit Ballot measure; restrictions on the use of RTID funds).
  - Increase flexibility for regional decisionmakers. Reduce constraints on the use of funding.
  - Eliminate the mandatory joint conditional 2007 ballot measure requirement.
3. System level planning and programming is not integrated or multimodal.
  - Consolidate WSDOT's, Sound Transit's, and the PSRC's system level planning responsibilities for highways and transit into a single new or modified entity responsible for system level planning for all modes.
  - Consider consolidating funding authorities as well.
4. Serious neglect of critical major maintenance needs.
  - Reduce partisan and political influence on programming decisions.
  - Rebalance maintenance/new capacity priorities to increase investments in maintenance.
5. Inadequate high capacity transit.
  - Don't do anything that harms Sound Transit's ability to pursue approval for a phase II ballot measure. Eliminate the mandatory joint conditional 2007 ballot measure requirement.

- Improve and expand transit funding options. This obviously merits a notebook rather than a bullet. Potential options include a VMT tax, system pricing revenues, extending the sales tax to gas, restoring local MVET authority, sales tax on auto parts and accessories, regional parking fees, and others.

The final problem on the list I would describe as a pending failure to capitalize on opportunities.

6. Failure to manage new roadway capacity for long term performance.
  - Design and build new freeway capacity with pricing mechanisms in place to help with financing and ensure long term functionality.